

Welcome to the 2016-17 USBC Annual Report!

We are thrilled to present the 2016-2017 Annual Report in a new virtual format. This is the print supplement to our [online version](#). Explore the following pages to learn about the United States Breastfeeding Committee's many recent activities and accomplishments.

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Call to Action for Breastfeeding Families



If you believe that every family who chooses to breastfeed should be surrounded by a landscape of breastfeeding support, then your energy, your voice, and your activism is needed.

Each day families across the United States face challenges along their breastfeeding journeys. Although four out of five moms initiate breastfeeding, **two-thirds report that they are unable to reach their personal breastfeeding goals.**

Today's breastfeeding mothers continue to be provided with sub-optimal care, discouraged from breastfeeding in public, and prohibited from taking breaks to express breast milk at work.

Something needs to change here.

Luckily, individuals and organizations around the country continue to stand up, refusing to accept that this remain the norm. Many legislative and policy opportunities have emerged in the past two years, and we are closely monitoring and mobilizing the field to take action.

This year, we developed the [Breastfeeding Legislation & Policy Update](#), a toolkit to provide advocates across the First Food field with information, talking points, and action opportunities. Now, it's easier than ever to get involved and make the important changes that our Nation's families not only need but deserve.

Find updates on the following topics:

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)	Dietary Guidelines
Fair Labor Standards Act Overtime Rule Regulations	Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act
Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act	Friendly Airports for Mothers (FAM) Act
Health Reform	Healthy Families Act
Healthy People 2030	Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program
Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA)	Supporting Working Moms Act (SWMA)
Tax Reform	

Together, we continue to make immense progress toward our shared vision of thriving families and communities. But, our work isn't finished. It's time to lace up our boots and come together in a united front. We look forward to our continued work together. **Will you keep standing with us in 2018?**

Thank You to Our Supporters

We are exceptionally proud and grateful to share our 2016-17 Annual Report, detailing the work made possible by the USBC's donors and supporters.

Our advocacy efforts are entirely funded by contributions from our donors, the Friends of the USBC. But our dedicated supporters didn't stop there. Individuals from across the Nation shared stories, met with Members of Congress, and spoke out to protect and expand the policies and investments that help create a landscape of breastfeeding support across the United States.

Every donation you make, petition you sign, social media post you share, and legislator you call, write, and visit brings us closer to ensuring every family has the opportunity to reach their personal breastfeeding goals.

2016 and 2017 presented us all with challenges and opportunities. Throughout all the ups and downs one thing has remained steady: the passion and dedication of our supporters.

None of this important, change-making work would be possible without you.

Today, more families have access to breastfeeding support because you stepped up when it mattered most. We are thankful for all we have achieved together, and we look forward to the important work we will continue to do together in the years to come.

Thank you for all you do,

The USBC Board of Directors and Staff Team



What it Means to Be On an 'Equity Journey'



Mona Liza Hamlin
Chair

In the non-profit field "equity" has turned into a buzzword. It is increasingly mentioned in health surveillance reports, grant application guidelines, mission statements, and more. With so many institutions and organizations taking up the mantle of equity work, many are searching for a deeper understanding of the meaning of equity.

In too many spaces, equity has been given a general, catch-all definition and in some cases has stopped being meaningful to the work. The truth of racial equity work is that it is personal and unique to every situation. Therefore, the definition of racial equity in the context of an organization's work needs to be specific to the organization's goals and processes.

At the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee, we have what we call a **working definition** of racial equity. By calling it working, we hope to center not only that this definition and the activities that come from it are our work, but also that it needs to work for us. Therefore, we can continue to shape it together, as an organization, if need be.

Like all meaningful equity work, our working definition of **equity** is rooted in collaboration. It is compiled from the examples of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Center for Social Inclusion, Collective Impact literature, and others. It views equity as three interwoven components: a lens, a mirror, and an outcome.

- It is a **lens** through which we view the world to inform and guide the design of our strategies and activities to build a "landscape of breastfeeding support."
- It is also a **mirror** through which we view ourselves and our organizations, examining our internal structures, culture, and policies and their impact on how the lens is applied and the outcome achieved.
- Lastly it is the **outcome** we seek to achieve, i.e., equity is realized when life outcomes are equal, in a statistical sense, regardless of one's identities.

Racial equity and Collective Impact have been the two driving forces of much of the change in the USBC in the past few years. Originally, we started to pilot Collective Impact and began our racial equity learning journey as side-by-side endeavors. In the beginning, we knew that they might be linked, but we didn't concretely understand how. As both our organizational learning journeys for racial equity and Collective Impact moved forward, it became clear that the thread that connects and binds all our work is racial equity. The three components of our working equity definition show us that it really should be universally intertwined throughout our work—it's on us to identify where those threads of equity are and pull them to the surface.

Part of this surfacing will take place in the rest of our annual report. Specifically, you'll see Interim Executive Director, Amelia Psmythe spotlights the personal work of leaders necessary in this work when racial equity learning journeys start with personal examination. Past Chair Jeannette Crenshaw talks about the personal learning journey that USBC board members and member representatives have been on and sharing out her reflections on where journeys like this might begin.

Former Past Chair Joan Younger Meek dives into the evolution of our organization and how we've needed to decentralize structures of power and center voices at the margins. The report from our CRASH Committee looks at the mirror component of our equity work, especially internal changes at the USBC, and the report on the "galaxy view" of our Constellations will reflect how all three components (lens, mirror, outcome) get implemented in the Constellations—further example of how our Collective Impact and racial equity work are intertwined.

Our Conference Program Committee lifts up the evolution of our conference and how their equity approach came to the forefront of their planning and implementation process, and Coalition Relations Director, Kinkini Banerjee, will discuss how equity is embedded in the center of all our coalition capacity building and support work.

As you can see, we've woven a racial equity lens or mirror into the way that we report out the key pieces of the USBC's work. We believe that intentionally placing racial equity in the foreground and making sure our working definition actually works for us will keep us accountable to our journey and maximize our impact in this critical work to build a "landscape of breastfeeding support."

The Role of the Personal Learning Journey in Racial Equity Work

As Mona laid out, the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee frames our equity work through a working definition with three parts: lens, mirror, and outcome. And, it's true that the outcome is the end point—the moment where our activities and work produce equitable outcomes. We can't begin the journey without first agreeing on where we're going and what our outcomes should be. For that reason, introductory work begins with a focus on the end goal.

Racial equity work with meaning and impact begins with a personal learning journey. This introduction builds individual understanding of what the outcome of this work will be and personal readiness to apply an equity lens or mirror.

Last year, I found the article "[Structural Racism and Supporting Black Lives – The Role of Health Professionals](#)" in *The New England Journal of Medicine* to be a stark spotlight on the impact this personal learning stance can have when it comes to racial equity. The article is co-authored by a public health professor, a health policy and management professor, and a family medicine doctor from the Twin Cities area. They reflect on the shooting and death of Philando Castile by a police officer in the presence of his girlfriend and her four-year-old daughter and show how this tragedy exemplifies the structural racism that permeates all levels of our society. I appreciated the authors' clear description of the role of the health community in creating equitable outcomes: "*As clinicians and researchers, we wield power, privilege, and responsibility for dismantling structural racism.*"



*Jeannette Crenshaw
Past Chair*

They also lay out four calls to action specific to those in a health care role:

1. *"Learn about, understand, and accept the United States' racist roots;"*
2. *"Understand how racism has shaped our narrative about disparities;"*
3. *"Define and name racism;"*
4. *"Center at the margins...shift our viewpoint from a majority group's perspective to that of marginalized group or groups."*

These four actions are personal. We must accept our responsibility to learn, understand, define, and shift.

The USBC Board of Directors has received financial support from funders to do racial equity work and we began that work with a focus on individual learning. We've also had the honor to work with gifted facilitators and trainers, both in-person and virtually, to guide us in our individual and group journeys. Your journey doesn't need to wait for a major grant for trainers and facilitators. And, your journey won't end with one exceptional training or conference (no matter how life-changing it might have been in the moment). New learning and new resources are key to personal growth.

Here are some ways to join the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee and me on the learning journey:

- [USBC's Racial Equity Webinar](#) series featuring fantastic speakers, including this year's conference plenary, [Nanci Luna Jimenez](#)
- [The Impact of Racism on the Health and Well-Being of the Nation](#), the American Public Health Association's webinar series on racism's impact on health and disparities
- "[Seeing White](#)," a podcast documentary series exploring whiteness in America
- — [USBC's Racial Equity Online Learning Community](#) where we announce upcoming webinars and share resources

We want to hear from you as well! Reach out to us in the Racial Equity Online Learning Community, where you can share links and resources as you learn about them too.

CRASH Committee Report

USBC's Strategic Goal 4, *Create and Model a Culture of Inclusion, Diversity & Equity*, is the bedrock principle guiding our journey of learning, working, and building together to achieve our shared vision of "thriving families and communities." This important goal is interwoven with each of the other three [USBC Strategic Goals](#). The CRASH Committee (CRASH is a mnemonic: Culture, Respect, Assessment/Affirmation, Sensitivity/Self-Awareness, Humility) oversees this structural and cultural transformation in partnership with all USBC stakeholders, ensuring that equity is intentionally infused throughout USBC efforts.

CRASH developed recommendations in key areas of USBC functioning: governance/leadership, membership, coalitions, and staff/personnel. Members of CRASH work in Transformation Teams in each of the key areas, to prioritize and guide implementation of the recommendations. The USBC board, staff, and key committees, such as the Board Governance Committee, the Constellation Steering Committee, the Membership Engagement Committee, the Conference Program Committee, and the Awards Committee spearhead the implementation.

By forging critical conversations and action, CRASH works to normalize our explicit focus on equity, and organize our collective capacity for authentic and respectful engagement with and among "First Food" stakeholders. By operationalizing USBC structures, policies, and practices to be purposeful and results-driven, we advance the internal capacity of the USBC and our network to advance health equity. An exceptional group of leaders serve on CRASH, bringing unwavering dedication, wisdom, and insight to ensure that the work of the committee truly embodies every aspect of its mnemonic.

The CRASH Committee salutes the [Center for Social Inclusion's National First Food Racial Equity Cohort](#). Some members of the cohort serve on USBC's board and committees. The leadership of cohort members has bolstered the USBC's capacity to advance our equity work with stakeholders.

Our work is as challenging as it is rewarding. While our collective understanding of structural racism and associated inequities is evolving, there are differing levels of awareness, and abilities to disrupt systemic racism and interpersonal racialized dynamics among stakeholders within the USBC community. We are committed to ensuring that all voices, especially those previously marginalized, are part of the breastfeeding movement. We must then truly listen to what those voices are telling us and apply what we learn in a 360° view of breastfeeding families' lives.

The USBC's equity journey has just begun, and we have a very long way to go to eliminate the stark racial disparities that exist in the "First Food" field, as in every aspect of American life. Each one of us has a critical role to play. We invite you to join the [Racial Equity Online Learning Community](#), and the many collaborative work and action communities, so together we can build a movement to ensure that all families are supported during pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, and beyond.

CRASH Committee Highlights

The CRASH Committee (CRASH is a mnemonic: Culture, Respect, Assessment/Affirmation, Sensitivity/Self-Awareness, Humility) oversees the structural and cultural transformation in partnership with all USBC stakeholders, ensuring that equity is intentionally infused throughout USBC efforts. CRASH developed recommendations in key areas of USBC functioning: governance/leadership, membership, staff/personnel, and coalitions. Members of CRASH work in Transformation Teams in each of the key areas, to prioritize and guide implementation of the recommendations. Read on for updates from 2016-17 in each area.

Governance/Leadership:

- **Increased representation from priority demographics in USBC leadership roles ("leadership" roles include both elected and appointed positions):** In 2016 a sub-group of the Board worked on this recommendation, tracking current board demographics, and setting measurable, time-bound goals to recruit and nominate greater numbers of leaders from priority demographics. Board priorities included recruiting/nominating individuals with a) marketing & media relations skills, b) under 35 years of age; c) with non-white racial/ethnic background, d) male, e) single, and with no children family status, and d) representing the Northeast and Midwest regions. The Board's liaison to the Nominating Committee conveyed these priorities. In 2017, the Board reviewed the implementation of CRASH recommendations related to Governance, and identified opportunities for strengthening governance oversight, including transitioning to a two-year term for Chair. This proposal has been brought to the Membership through a ballot initiative, and we eagerly await the input of our membership.
- **Piloting of Board Mentorship and Assessment of board culture and dynamics:** The board piloted a peer mentoring system in 2016, pairing newly elected board members with more experienced Directors, to provide knowledge, advice and support in learning the ropes, understanding the board culture, and preparing for full participation. While helpful, the implementation of the mentorship system was inconsistent. Lessons learned from the pilot is helping reshape the mentorship program to one that is adaptable to the needs of mentees and mentors, is goal-focused, and emphasizes the learning objectives of the mentee and incorporates measurement of outcomes. In 2017, acknowledging that cultural differences enrich board work and strengthen governance, the board self-assessment for the first time included questions related to inclusionary dynamics. Questions assessed both functional inclusion as well as relational/social inclusion. The findings reinforced the board's intent to invest efforts in meaningful and authentic inclusion.

Membership

- **Track current demographics of individual reps and set goals for increased representation from priority demographics:** The CRASH Membership Transformation Team reviewed in depth our existing member categories and made recommendations for revisions and significant expansion. Previously, each member organization could only name two representatives. Recent updates to our membership policy now allow member organizations to name up to four representatives, with strong urging to use this as an opportunity to encourage individuals who can contribute lived experience as a member of a non-dominant group. This shift is improving our member organizations' capacity to engage in USBC Constellations, and bringing talented new voices to the forefront of our collaborative work. The CRASH recommendations for membership expansion led us to make bylaws amendments which have been brought to the membership for approval. This proposed broadening of the USBC tent will help build the critical mass of stakeholders of color so greatly needed to accomplish our mission and vision.
- **Explore member participation through other venues such as conference calls and webinars:** The CRASH Membership Transformation Team assessed and identified barriers faced by member representatives to participating in USBC meetings, committees, and Constellations. Recognizing the

fiscal and logistical challenges with in-person participation, portions of the 2016 Annual Meeting were webcast. Expanded opportunities were developed for virtual participation in the Constellation Sessions, and they are now held virtually in the spring and fall. Web-based advocacy and networking meetings with various stakeholder groups are stimulating greater engagement and participation. The use of web meetings and the enhanced virtual platform is creating pathways for our member organization and representatives to engage in collaborative and coordinated action across the nation.

Coalitions

- **Continue/expand tracking of current demographics of state coalition leadership and membership:** Individual and Group Profiles in the USBC's new website platform collect data on the racial/ethnic demographics of organizations' memberships. Collecting and publishing aggregated demographic data is one of the components to build the capacity of coalitions and the breastfeeding field to apply an "equity mirror" to examine organizational internal structures, culture, and policies of diversity and inclusion. Equity-related trainings are helping raise awareness among coalition leaders and helping them translate data into measurable actions towards equitable outcomes.
- **Share USBC activities and resources; identify and provide training and TA opportunities to build coalition capacity to advance diversity/equity work:** The [Racial Equity Online Learning Community](#) and the bi-monthly [Racial Equity webinar series](#) with over 500 registrants, have become valuable components of collective learning for the "First Food" field. With funding support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the virtual community provides multiple venues and opportunities for individuals to engage in discussions on equity and inclusion and build capacity for action. Webinar topics have included: [Breastfeeding Voices Across America](#), with Nayeli Gomez-Burns, Ashley Brown and Jayme Paddock presenting Latinx, Africa American, and Native American perspectives; [The Power of WE: Leadership for a Multicultural Age](#) by Juana Bordas; [What's Stress Got to Do With It: How Inequities Contribute to Toxic Stress](#) by Dr. Denese Shervington; [Societal Equity: A Fresh Look at Creating Effective Strategies](#) by Dr. Pauline Brooks; and [Building Cultural Safety in Lactation Care](#) by Hakima Payne. The accompanying file library is updated on a regular basis with selected general readings, as well as readings related to each bi-monthly theme. Moderated forums and blog posts stimulate discussion and sharing among community participants.

Staff

- **Formalize professional development plans for each staff member, and allocate funds annually to offer education/training benefits:** There is funding allocated for each member of the staff team to attend a conference or training on a topic identified as a priority for their professional development. These conferences/workshops have included *Collective Impact for Backbone Organizations, Building Impactful Networks for Collaboration, Non-Profit Management, Creating Space: Freedom to Lead and Leading for Freedom, Self to Systems* trainings, and more. At staff meetings, team members briefly present on any conference attended to promote cross-training and peer learning. Staff regularly use the staff sharing forum to recommend and exchange articles and resources.
- **Provide ongoing equity training to all staff, to foster a culture of inclusion:** Equity training is embedded in new staff orientation and issues identified by staff are prioritized for ongoing training. Staff meetings include deliberation on real-time issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Staff "Coffee Chats" on equity and Collective Impact topics include team analysis and review of books and articles, and the annual planning retreat allows ongoing training and education for the staff team.

The Galaxy View of USBC Constellations



Click on the above image to download and view PowerPoint

Is the USBC a Network or an Organization?



*Joan Younger Meek
Past Chair*

In my time with the USBC, I have been fortunate to have the singular experience of serving as the Chair of the Board of Directors twice: first from 2008-2010, and most recently during the 2015-2016 governance year. As I highlighted in my [2015 annual report column](#), "much has evolved and advanced"—for the USBC *and* the field—in between these time periods.

I would characterize my terms of board chair service as straddling major shifts in the USBC's organizational development. During my first term, we embarked on our first-ever strategic planning effort focused on the organization itself. Prior to this point, we had operated as if the USBC's 2001 publication, [Breastfeeding in the United States: A National Agenda](#), was the USBC's strategic plan. This document, however, was a road map of policy and practice change goals for the entire nation; it did not set goals for the USBC as an organization. Although this broad and external focus was appropriate in the earlier years to inspire both national organizations and federal agencies to align with the USBC, its limitations became apparent. Most notably, we needed to focus our very

limited funding and staff capacity on concrete, achievable actions that would move our nation toward a "landscape of breastfeeding support."

The five-year strategic plan we developed in 2009, therefore, put much more emphasis on the differentiation between the role of the USBC versus that of the breastfeeding field as a whole. It included as one of four top-level goals: "Ensure that USBC is a sustainable and effective organization, funded, structured, and aligned to do its work." Accordingly, this plan ushered in a new era with significant focus on internal actions and centralized structures: building up the capacity of the nonprofit organization behind the broader USBC coalition or network. Working closely with USBC Executive Director, Megan Renner, to revamp almost every aspect of the USBC's functioning, we informally dubbed this as the transition between "USBC 1.0" and "USBC 2.0."

As we fast-forward several years, we reach the exploration and planning processes that ultimately led to the publication of the current [USBC Strategic Framework](#) in 2014, followed by the design and implementation of a Collective Impact "[Constellation Model](#)" in 2015-16. When I was elected to the USBC board in 2014, I knew that I was walking into another transitional phase, this time between the USBC 2.0 and USBC 3.0 versions of our national breastfeeding coalition.

As I had remained involved as a member representative and committee and task force leader during the intervening years, I already knew the factors that had precipitated this newest philosophical shift, or "upgrade." The implementation of the 2.0 plan had indeed been successful at generating a period of tremendous growth in the organization's funding and staff capacity. But, along the way, the focus on strengthening the USBC had begun to lose sight of the coalition—the influential network of national organizations that had formed the nonprofit organization in the first place.

It has truly been an honor to steward the USBC through this second era of change: putting in place new tools and pathways to engage stakeholders and share in collaborative leadership of initiatives to "build a landscape of breastfeeding support." Since handing off the chair's gavel to Jeannette Crenshaw in 2016, I've also had the inspiring experience of co-leading the work of the American Academy of Pediatrics as a new organizational "steward" during a Constellation "incubation period."

I am pleased to report that, with funding support from the CDC, backbone support from the USBC, and the dedicated engagement of representatives from participant organizations, the American Academy of Pediatrics has recently developed a comprehensive action plan for the [Physician Education & Training Constellation](#). Although this has been a much-discussed topic at USBC since the late 90s, the collaborative processes implemented under the USBC's Constellation Model have truly taken the dialogue, strategic planning, and multi-organization outreach and commitment to new levels.

As I began to embark upon this new constellation project in late 2016—now from the participant perspective rather than the USBC board view—I was especially intrigued to read the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* article, "[Living in the World of Both/And](#)." This piece was shared in the USBC's [Weekly Wire e-newsletter](#) and forwarded to me by Megan with an excited note about its relevance to our shared experiences of the USBC phases 1.0-2.0-3.0.

As I reflect on the article and my own experiences with the USBC, it is clear that the **USBC 1.0 phase** was **network-dominant**. This was a time of bringing together a loose coalition: a "messy process," but ultimately successful at innovating many new ideas while mobilizing and engaging new stakeholders. But without the "handrails" and capacity to guide and support collaborative activities, the energy from in-person membership meetings quickly dissipated.

The **USBC 2.0 phase** reacted to these limitations by swinging the pendulum to an **organization-dominant** approach. We sought and received funding for program service work at "USBC central," and built up the USBC's brand and organizational voice even beyond the "sum of its parts." But of course this voice could not always represent *all* of the parts—not all member organizations agree on every topic. During this period, centralized action also became dependent upon the passions of a few dedicated individual task force leaders, rather than on harnessing the collective voices and capacity of the member organizations.

So it is now appropriate to strike a new balance during the **USBC 3.0 phase: the "Both/And" of a hybrid model that attempts to integrate both a network and an organizational approach**. The USBC staff team has truly developed a unique set of competencies to span these differing but complementary approaches, including the strategic analysis of when to use which approach. With the emerging Physician Education & Training Constellation, I have witnessed firsthand how the model supports understanding and leveraging the strengths of both approaches, while also anticipating and preemptively adapting to their limitations.

As the article describes, there is no perfect mix of the two that applies to all situations. At the USBC leadership level, it is indeed true that "who leads and who follows is a constant source of conversation at every level." Finding the balance is an art, not a science. But it is art, once mastered, that truly does create value that is "greater than the sum of its parts."

I believe that **USBC 3.0** will help create a landscape of breastfeeding support across the United States by serving as a national collective voice for breastfeeding and securing its future as a strong, stable backbone organization, while also engaging a diverse group of stakeholders through collective impact.

Self in Systems: The Role of Personal Work In Equitable Systems Change



Amelia Psmythe
Interim Executive Director

In these recent years of exponential growth and change, we've seen that *how* we work together is as important as *what* we do together. While other features in this annual report describe the USBC's infrastructure tools and processes to support the field, and our organizational work to understand together what equity means in the First Food movement, this is a space to explore the head/heart connection that allows individuals to effectively build and change the systems of which we're a part.

In movements such as this, where the intentional time is taken to gather people and build trusting relationships, progress and success are defined and experienced differently than the project-based work many of us are more familiar with. It is becoming clear that supporting Collective Impact initiatives with a deeply embedded equity lens, mirror, and outcome commitment inspires and requires deep personal and interpersonal work in order to make advancements on a systems level.

Collective Impact thought-leader FSG has developed a training for Collective Impact leaders that notices and cultivates the dynamic role a leader's "interior condition" plays in Collective Impact. FSG calls the training approach "[Self-to-Systems](#)." This quote from Bill O'Brien sets up the central premise:

"The success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener. What counts is not only what leaders do and how they do it, but their 'interior condition,' the inner place from which they operate or the source from which all their actions originate."

The connection between a solidly grounded, humble leader and effective collective action is critical for our work as an organization of organizations (or a network of networks). When we meet at USBC tables, we are all leaders; and so we share a responsibility to do our personal work. By doing so, our collective work can advance as effectively and efficiently as possible. A leader with a clear interior condition listening deeply from the heart, transcending what Otto Scharmer in [Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges](#) identifies as listening from habit or data. He posits that empathic listening creates connections that foster trust and trusting spaces allow for courage to meet vulnerability so that mutual support emerges within a group. Listening with an open will—moving beyond judgment, presumption, or expertise—is generative. A learning stance shows the courage to be curious and collaborative and resources leveraged from that place originate in each person's intrinsic motivation. Over time, empathic listening allows for a collective willingness to take the necessary risks to speak truth to power for meaningful and measurable impact.

It's not easy.

This work requires a deep personal commitment and active role in personal growth. As a white woman raised in predominantly white communities, I am continuously learning to identify and check my privilege and decenter white dominant culture ways of knowing, being, and expressing. I am learning to intentionally seek out other white sisters committed to this work so we can confront our blind spots and

not burden our sisters of color with the work of helping us see and confront the subtle and overt forms oppression can take in our shared collaborative work.

Kimarie Bugg, CEO of Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere (ROSE), and first Chair of the USBC's CRASH (equity) Committee frequently says that "*being at the table changes the conversation.*" Obviously, I cannot speak for women of color and their experiences when entering dominant culture spaces. Instead, I offer an honoring bow to the courage, strength, and conviction I witness as they help shape USBC's culture and activities to advance the equitable outcomes we must achieve for the breastfeeding families in our country.

It's not easy to serve as a leader in this emergent space, yet, we must disrupt the exclusionary practices of this Nation's past wherever we work, play, pray, and dream. At the USBC collaborative tables, we work toward systems-level changes that ultimately touch the early life experiences of children and families across the U.S.

In this work, I have learned that if we want to have meaningful and equitable impact, we must start by meeting our personal vulnerabilities with the courage to deconstruct the biases that created the inequitable systems that surround each of us.

The opportunity to influence the building of a just and equitable world is worth the time and effort it takes. We must gather all stakeholders, adopt a learning stance together, engage in conversations with each other in real time even when it's uncomfortable, and support one another in growth. There is no doubt that this personal and interpersonal work is the only path to systems change.

Breastfeeding Coalitions: Building Collaborations to Advance Equity in the First Food Field

The focus of [The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding \(SGCTA\)](#) on developing and strengthening breastfeeding coalitions recognizes that it is at the state and local levels that initiatives will be implemented and adapted most effectively to address specific populations. By ensuring robust representation of the SGCTA sectors among their membership and leadership, breastfeeding coalitions can be uniquely positioned to serve as key bridge builders, cultural translators, and connectors, integrating breastfeeding, specifically, and maternal and child health, broadly, into larger frameworks of community health and resilience.



*Kinkini Banerjee
Coalition Relations Director*

The active partnership among USBC's network of coalitions, national member organizations, and breastfeeding public health partners, is helping identify, acknowledge, and address inequities in breastfeeding support that mar the steady progress our nation continues to achieve in breastfeeding rates. We understand that this is long term, iterative work, and our shared vision will see fruition only when we genuinely engage the communities we serve in the work of policy and practice change. It is with this understanding that the USBC has centered [Collective Impact \(CI\)](#), [equity](#), and [community engagement](#) in all aspects of our organizational culture, structures, programs, policies, and practices. This has meant embracing [values of integrity, inclusion, and collective leadership](#), moving upstream and intentionally naming and addressing the many existing barriers to equity, both within and beyond our "walls." We believe this stance will help us better identify and eliminate systemic discriminatory policies and practices and transform First Food systems and structures towards access, justice, self-determination, and equitable sharing of power and resources. We are grateful to you for being on this journey with us for the past four years.

The USBC's commitment to improving capacity and engagement of breastfeeding coalitions (Strategic Goal 3.5) [has never been stronger](#). Our virtual learning opportunities are geared toward engaging coalitions to assess the landscape of breastfeeding support, and champion for and build infrastructure for transformative change. By leveraging technology we are able to reach and involve stakeholders across the First Food field in a variety of ways. Community workspaces with individual profiles, coalition group profiles, and the [SGCTA Action Directory](#) (compilation of coalition activities relevant to each SGCTA action) bring forward new voices, create and enrich meaningful connections, and nurture equitable spaces for those who do the work on the ground. The [Coalition Learning Connection](#), Breastfeeding Discussion Forums, curated file libraries, blog posts, and online [Learning Communities](#) are coordinated with webinars and networking meetings to enhance coalition engagement, collaboration, learning, and peer-sharing. [Breastfeeding Intervention](#) webinars and USBC program guidance and technical support emphasize strategic, results-driven, local and national public and private partnerships, coordinated for sustainability and spread. The [Power Tools](#), [Racial Equity](#) and [Collective Impact](#) webinar series bring nationally known experts, case studies, tools, resources, and best practices to seed ideas and action.

Together, we are building a robust network and invigorating collaboration and resource sharing. Being responsive to your needs and readiness is a top priority, and we offer ongoing trainings to support your coalition's participation in the virtual collaborative. Stay tuned this spring for upcoming video clips on the many collaborative features of our virtual platform. Utilizing different modes of online communication, we highlight and disseminate news and resources via the USBC's weekly e-Newsletter [Staying Abreast: Weekly Wire \(WW\)](#), and through our [social media channels](#). The [Coalition Spotlight](#), which launched in January 2017, spotlights the coalition work happening across the country. Our in-person Annual Membership Meeting and Conference augment the virtual learning community by providing networking opportunities and in-depth trainings to build our collective capacity to advance health equity.

The community outcomes we seek will be achieved by collectively reforming and transforming systems. In our fifth year of utilizing Collective Impact approaches, we continue to evolve and adapt to the [changing paradigms in the CI movement](#). The bylaw amendments proposed to our membership, when approved, will allow breastfeeding coalitions and community based organizations to become full-fledged members of the USBC. With this rapid expansion of our community, we are looking forward to partnering with a broad and diverse group of leaders, including many who may not currently be holding traditional positions of power. USBC-supported committees and constellations already value the richness brought by having grassroots voices at the table and are adopting principles of strategic learning, and exploration of community aspirations in their functioning. Soon, we will be inviting you to join state communities of practice bringing coalition voices to inform [constellation](#) priorities. We will be learning and practicing approaches of [Targeted Universalism](#) with you. As we individually and collectively gain greater levels of understanding about how institutional and structural racism impact our field, it is to be expected that we may experience some discomfort. Your partnership will be key to normalizing the fact that this work is hard and requires a long-term sustained commitment. We will continue to explore with you the ways individuals and groups are connecting, organizing, building bridges, and learning to mobilize leadership capacity for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Each one of us will be key in co-creating brave spaces within the First Food Field so that we can all more effectively operationalize a landscape of breastfeeding support across the United States. Thanks to your generous feedback and involvement, our [Racial Equity virtual learning community](#) is getting stronger every day. We have had webinars with topics ranging from managing stress and building resilience for equity work, to developing authentic relationships and co-creating a "just culture" in the First Food field. Resources and best practices are generously shared via the community listserv. Leadership that actively contributes to advancing health equity will be key if we are to be credible players in these ground-breaking efforts.

Please accept our overwhelming gratitude and respect for all that you do in service to your communities on behalf of breastfeeding families. Over the past years, we have created unprecedented momentum together. Your tireless advocacy for added federal investments in breastfeeding has translated to funding for breastfeeding programs and projects in every state and territory. As working relationships between coalitions, health departments, and community-based organizations have strengthened, we are experiencing increasing integration of breastfeeding activities into other areas of the public health agenda.

Breaking down the barriers that keep families from meeting their breastfeeding goals is a marathon, not a sprint. In the coming year, our advocacy efforts will need to be fierce, due to the big shifts in philosophy related to both policy priorities and federal spending. Partnering together, we can and will be stronger!

I look forward to our continued work together in 2018!

National Breastfeeding Coalitions Conferences/Convenings: Centering Community Engagement and Racial Justice in Maternal and Child Health

A paramount focus of the Conference Program Committee (CPC) is to guide the design of the [National Breastfeeding Coalitions Conference \(NBCC\)](#) so that the program effectively builds coalition capacity to address the deep inequities that exist in breastfeeding outcomes. The in-person format of the NBCC complements USBC's round-the-year virtual learning program, which includes webinars, sharing via learning communities, and live discussion via networking calls. And, it is geared to maximize experiential group learning. The purpose and content are relevant to all types of breastfeeding coalitions, including state and community-level coalitions, cultural coalitions, and the member organizations of the national breastfeeding coalition, known as the USBC.

The NBCC differs from traditional breastfeeding or lactation conferences as it does not focus on enhancing clinical lactation skills. Instead, the NBCC focuses on enhancing coalitions' and organizations' ability to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding in an equitable way. It provides an opportunity for attendees to actively engage with national public health priorities to address state/local contexts and concerns. Learning to utilize Collective Impact and equity-based principles and tools supports conference participants to identify structural barriers, better harness wisdom of relevant and diverse stakeholders from across the First Food field, and develop shared contextual definitions of equity in breastfeeding support. We strongly believe that by centering racial equity and fostering deeper levels of engagement with stakeholders and communities, coalitions and member organizations will be better equipped to seek strategic cross-sector collaborations and create the infrastructure and momentum needed to improve the health and well-being of women, infants, children, and families.

At the **2016 National Breastfeeding Coalitions Conference**, [A New Day: Community Engagement for Equity in the First Food Movement](#), we were thrilled to welcome many new grassroots voices. As the theme suggests, the learning sessions were explicitly geared towards using an **equity lens in what we do**, by engaging diverse networks of stakeholders to inform and guide strategies, policies and practice changes for a more equitable "landscape of breastfeeding support." The Conference highlights provide a snapshot of the breadth of stakeholder issues and voices participating in the learning and sharing.

The **2017 National Breastfeeding Coalitions Convening** was designed to better "hold" the equity-infused work occurring within the First Food community, and help us take the next step on our equity journey. Making lemonade out of lemons, the Conference Program Committee leveraged the uncertainty of funding for the conference, due to looming threats of Affordable Care Act (ACA) repeal (specifically, the Prevention and Public Health Fund) by completely revamping the conference structure. Instead of inviting proposals for concurrent breakout sessions with panel speakers, the CPC designed a format emphasizing whole group learning and sharing to mobilize and sustain commitment for our shared goals. Focused on the use of an **equity mirror in how we do our work**, the CPC prioritized creating inclusive spaces to foster deep learning, dialogue, and sharing with a program that supported participants to appreciate and respect one another, build trust, support one another's leadership, and hold each other to high principles during and beyond the duration of the convening. The Conference Highlights demonstrate how the learning arc of the workshops was geared to support participants in connecting the dots towards policy, systems, and environmental changes to achieve the community outcomes we seek.

Your partnership continues to be invaluable to us and we are grateful for your guidance throughout this learning curve. As we reflect on the 2016 and 2017 NBCCs, we acknowledge your experiences, both positive and challenging, and the lessons USBC has learned. We are dedicated to being an organization that acknowledges our missteps and has capacity for repair. Specifically, we wanted to highlight a few lessons learned from previous conferences, and how we addressed them at the 2017 convening:

2016-17 USBC Annual Report | usbreastfeeding.org/annual-report

- A critical part of the conference/convening is recognizing grassroots leaders. We have been proud to honor Legacy and Tribal Trailblazer scholarship awardees at the past three conferences. Instead of holding the awards ceremony during the closing lunch as we had done in 2014 and 2016, when attendees begin departing to make their flights home, we honored awardees on the convening's opening night and during times with highest critical mass of participants present.
- We heard that you wanted to be able to process and unpack the learnings of the conference in real time. Safe spaces offered for identity caucusing during the convening allowed us to engage in deeper discussions, as well as provide opportunities for healing conversations.
- We opened up opportunities for convening participants to reflect and share personal insights and stories from the field during an Open Mic and Mixer event. This successful event built community and inspired participants.
- To ensure that we were better able to facilitate meaningful interactions and interrupt negative dynamics, a cadre of host leaders, which include USBC Board, CRASH, Constellation Steering and Conference Program Committee members, and the staff team participated in training to be effective conference weavers and facilitators.

We are committed to involving you in every step of the way as we plan future USBC meetings and convenings. We were excited that so many of you shared your insights during a survey shared with you late fall of 2017 about location, format, and timing of future USBC events. Thank you for your comments! A special ad-hoc Advisory Committee reviewed the survey findings and suggestions from past conference evaluations and developed new guidelines. Starting in 2018, the USBC Membership Meeting and NBCC will merge into a single networking and learning event. In keeping with our commitment to equity, on even years, the Meeting/Convening will be held outside of the DC area. Meeting locations will be selected based on centrality of location, ease/optimal cost of travel, and most importantly in a region with high breastfeeding disparities.

We are thrilled to announce that you selected the final two location options for the 2018 NBCC – Atlanta and Chicago! Camille Abbe, our USBC Conference Manager, is weighing the relevant parameters for each location, and we will inform you as soon as the location is finalized.

As we look ahead to 2018, we renew our commitment to an even stronger partnership with our network of breastfeeding coalitions and member organizations. We look forward to our work together to **advance equity in maternal and child health with tangible outcomes**.

Warmest regards,

CPC Co-Chairs: Kimarie Bugg, Cindy Chavez, Ifeyinwa Asiodu, Kim Moore-Salas



Members of the 2017 Conference Program Committee:

Committee Co-Chairs: Ifeyinwa Asiodu and Cindy Chavez

Board Chair Elect: Mona Liza Hamlin

CRASH Cte Liaison: Emily Taylor

Committee Members: Carol MacGowan, Rose Cohen, Kimberly Moore-Salas, Brianna Wanner, Grace Yee, Camie Goldhammer, Andrea Serano, Lorraine Boyd, Stephanie Rodriguez-Mozer, Allison Walsh

Members of the 2016 Conference Program Committee:

Conference Co-Chairs: Kimarie Bugg and Cindy Chavez

Board Chair Elect: Jeannette Crenshaw

Committee Members: Heidi Agostinho, Ifeyinwa Asiodu, Rose Cohen, Helen Dimas, Carol MacGowan, Kimberly Moore-Salas, Linda Smith, Allison Walsh, BriAnna Wanner

Highlights: NBCC 2016



—316 attendees, from 49 states, as well as 2 territories (Guam & Puerto Rico), and 6 Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs)/tribal coalitions

—29 Breakfast Table Topics

—24 Breakout Panel Sessions on five concurrent tracks

—24 Posters

—5 Pre-Conference Workshop Sessions

~Strategic Thinking & Planning: Coalition Style

~State Strategies for Equity in Access to Lactation Care

~What's Race Got to Do With It?

~Putting Concepts Into Action: Using a Racial Equity Tool

~Mobilizing Movements with Unified Messaging

—4 Plenary Sessions

—4 Special Interest Meetings:

~Tribal Coalitions

~State Breastfeeding Coordinators (non-WIC)

~National Collaborative for Advancing the Ten Steps (NCATS)

~National Collaborative for Advancing Breastfeeding in Child Care (NCABC)

—2 Optional Side Events:

~Friends Reception: evening event to acknowledge USBC donors

~Advocacy Day of Action: 47 coalition members visited congressional representatives to educate on and advocate for breastfeeding

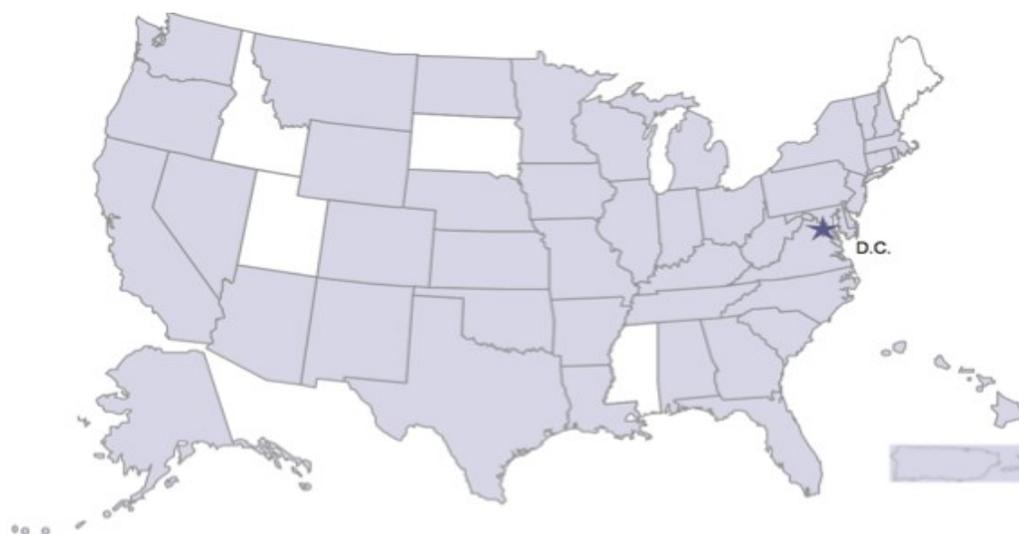
Highlights: NBCC 2017



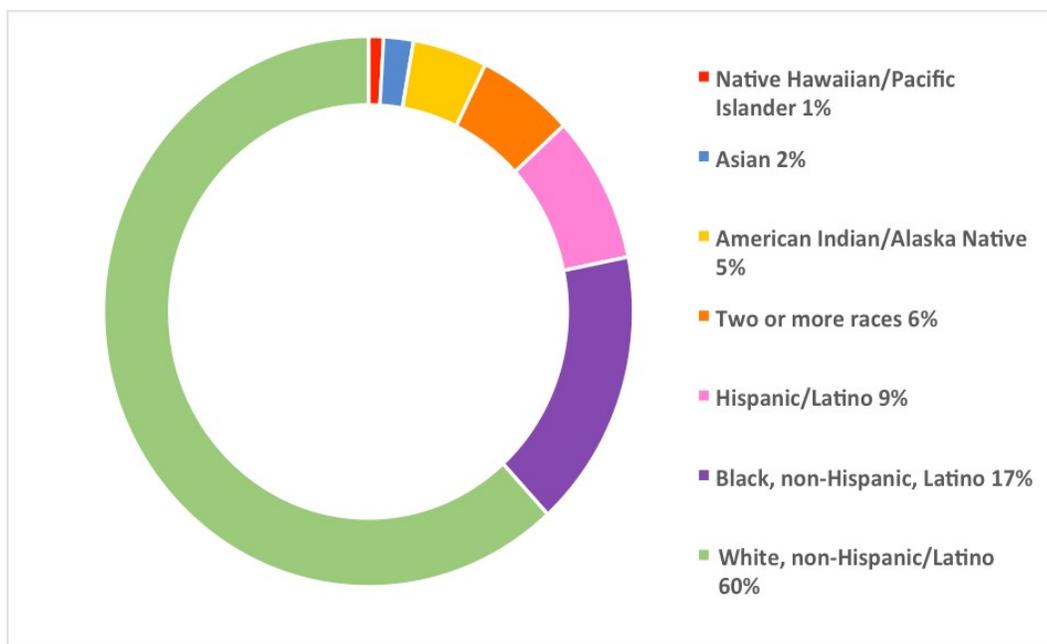
Blessing by Native Elder and Appearance by Zotigh Kiowa Tribal Drumming Group



226 attendees from...



226 attendees representing...



- 65.1% of convening participants represented a state/territorial breastfeeding coalition
- 32.6% represented a national organization
- 46.5% participants were first time NBCC attendees

Friday, August 4. Opening Session

No Recipes, Just Relationships: Looking Inward to Create a More Just Breastfeeding Field, presented by Nanci Luna Jimenez, Luna-Jimenez Associates

Whole Group Deep Dive Training on Saturday, August 5 & Sunday, August 6

Saturday, Aug 5. Morning Session:

Applying an Equity Mirror: Continuing Our Personal Learning Journeys to Improve Readiness and Capacity for Equity Work, presented by Integral Coaching

Saturday, Aug 5. Afternoon Session

Applying an Equity Mirror: Transforming Our Organizations to Advance Equity and Inclusion in the First Food Movement, presented by Integral Coaching

Sunday, August 6. Morning Session

Applying an Equity Lens: Activating Tools from the Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE) to Inform and Guide the Design of Policy/Practice Change Strategies and Program Activities, presented by Center for Social Inclusion

Sunday, August 6. Closing Plenary

Breastfeeding in the Community: Building Sustainability through PSE Changes, presented by Nikia Sankofa-Fuller, National Association of County and City Health Officials

Breakfast Table Topic Sharing

Peer-sharing sessions on Community Based Breastfeeding Support Groups in Low Income Neighborhoods—Can They Work?

- Ally, Accomplice, or Simply Annoying? Resources for White Folks to Understand and Dismantle Racism
- Paving the Road to IBCLC - Baby Café USA's IBLCE-approved Mentoring Program
- The Flipped Coalition Year of Growth: Fostering Equity through Communication and Partnership-Building
- Establishing Donor Breast Milk Depots to Bridge Supply Gap and Ensure Breast Milk for the Most Medically Fragile Babies: A Public/Private Partnership in LA County
- Contracts: Funding Options for Coalition
- Breastfeeding Advocacy 101: Know Your Rights! Mobilizing Los Angeles Grassroots Advocates!

Identity Caucusing

- Person of Color Identity Safe Space
- White Identity Safe Space
- Native American Safe Space
- Flex Safe Space (LGBTQIA, any other self-identified group)

Special Interest Meetings

- Regional Meetings
- Tribal Coalitions
- State & WIC State Breastfeeding Coordinators

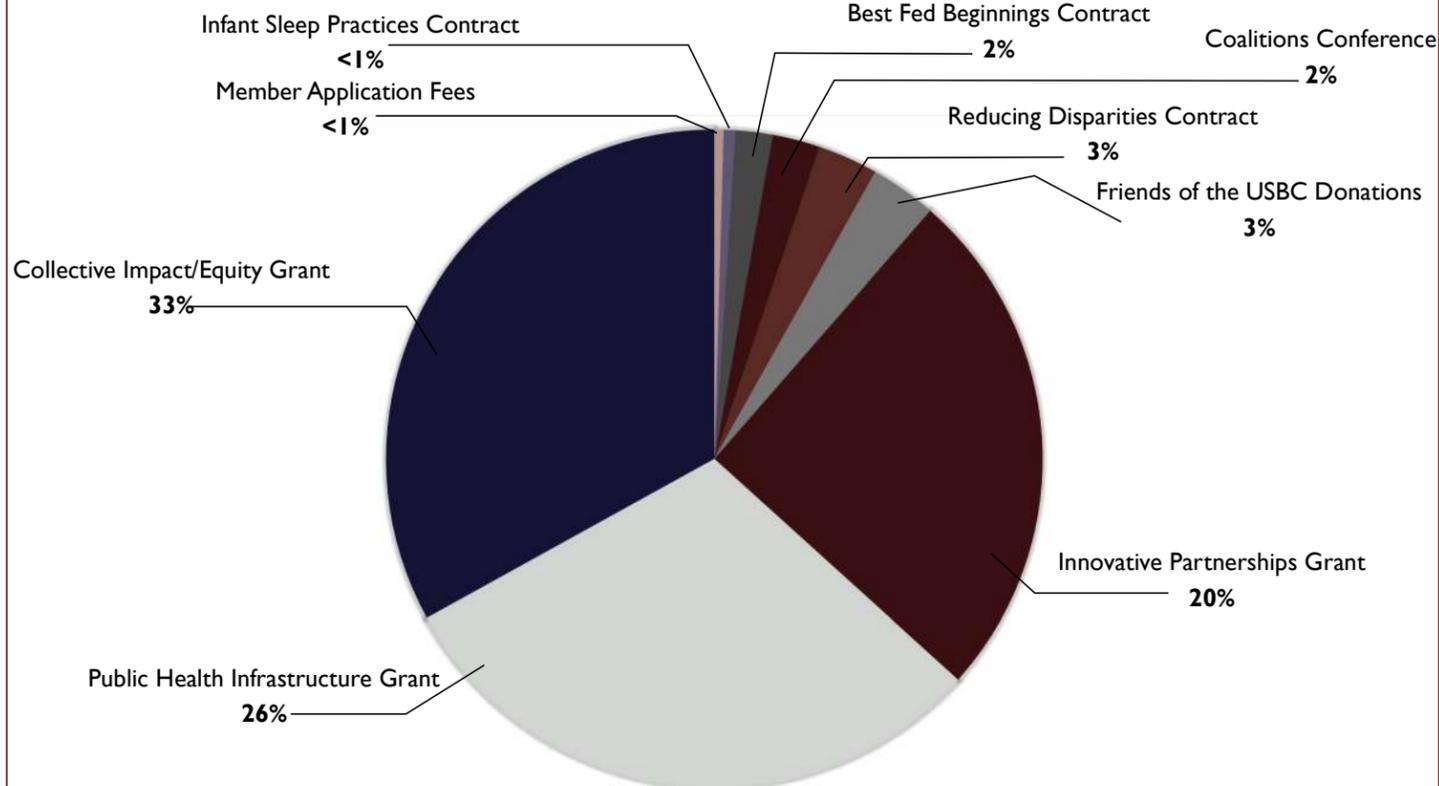
Other Events

- Open Mic & Social Media Mixer
- Movie Night hosted by MomsRising: *Zero Weeks*

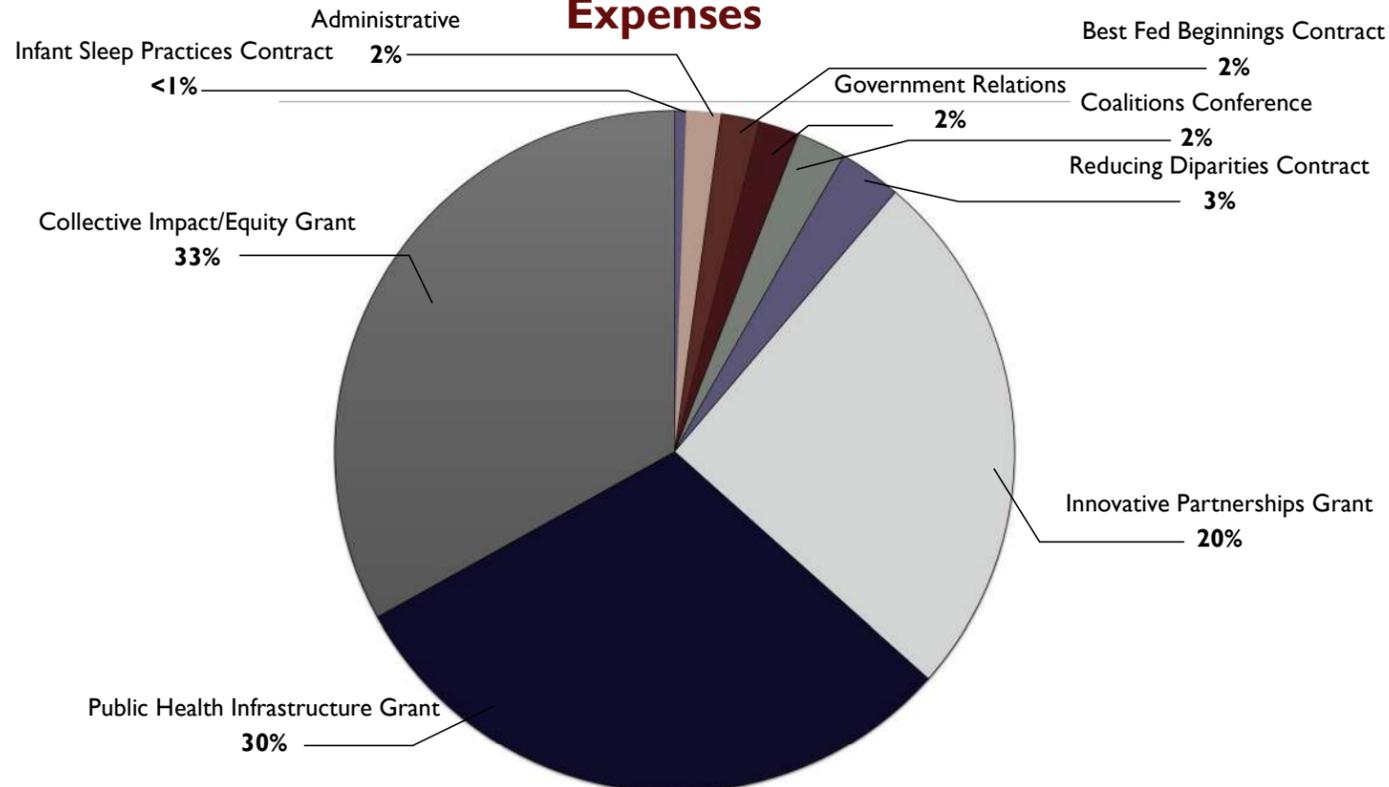


2015 Financial Information

Revenue

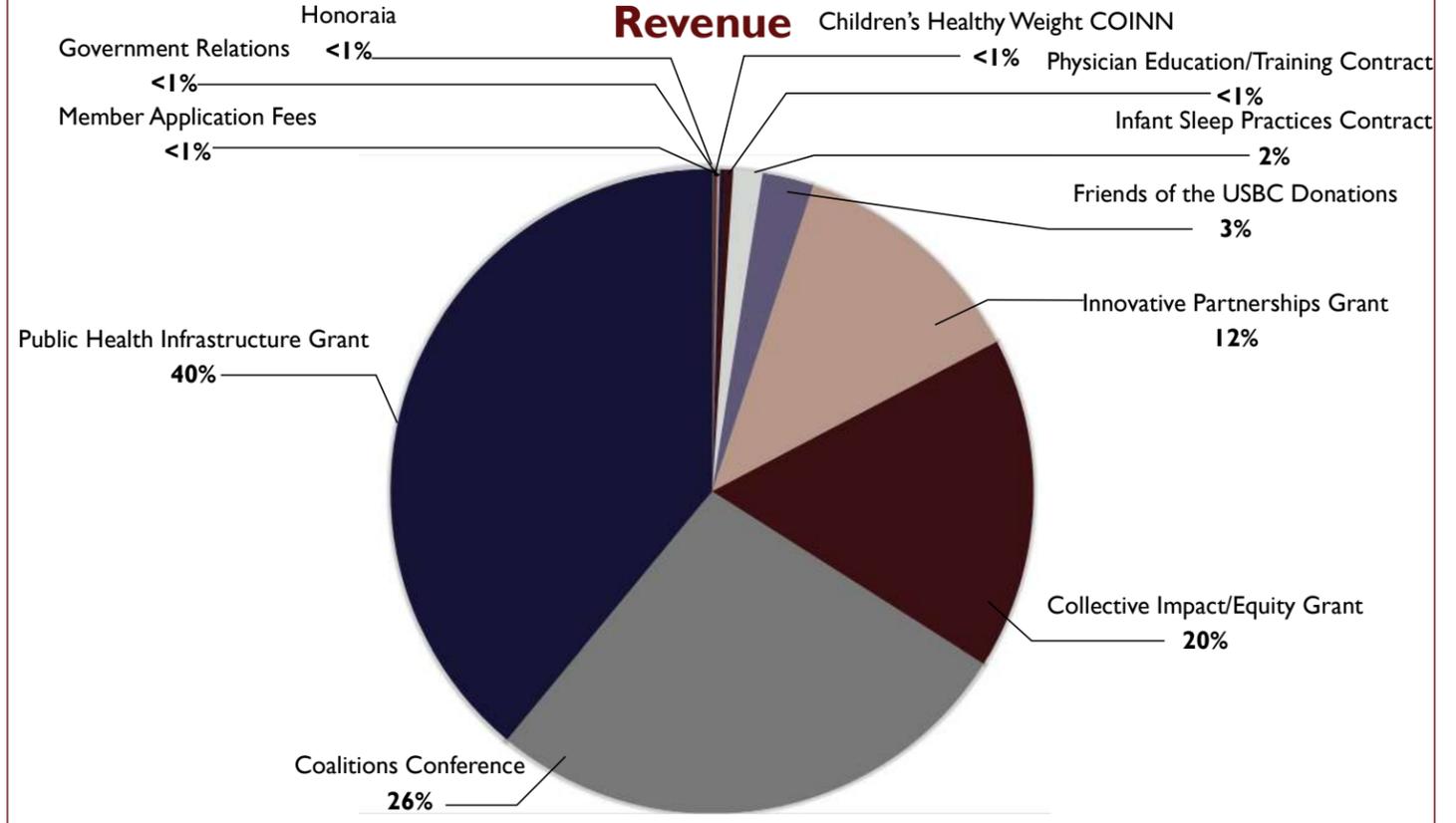


Expenses

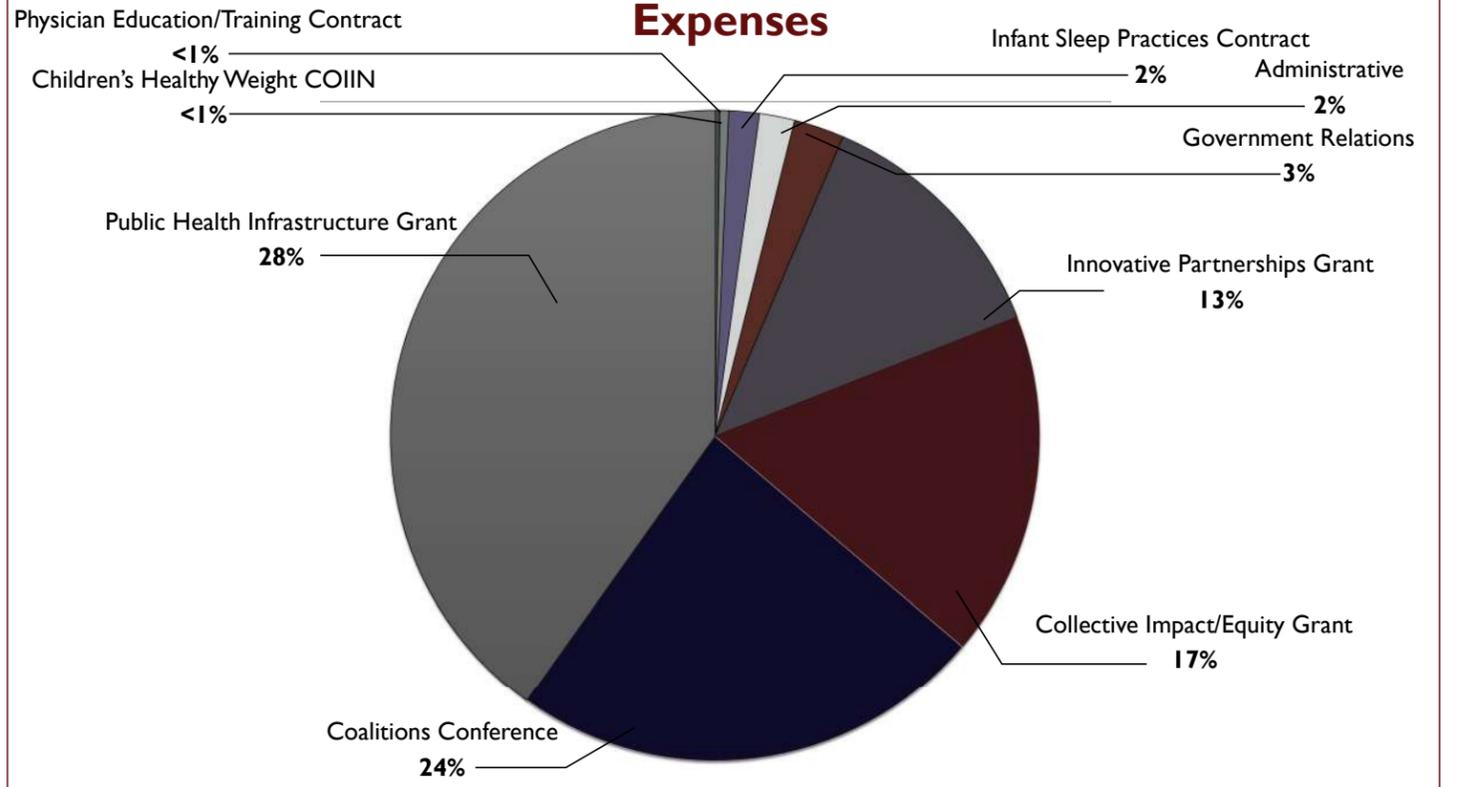


2016 Financial Information

Revenue



Expenses



Thank You to Outgoing Executive Director, Megan Renner



Megan Renner
Executive Director 2005-2017

Megan Renner gave more than a decade of service to the United States Breastfeeding Committee, and in certainty and uncertainty, clarity and ambiguity, she led us into a time of unprecedented growth for the First Food Field.

Megan guided the USBC through its first strategic planning process, which was followed by a strategic framework geared towards achieving greater alignment and connection from grassroots to treetops. During her tenure, membership increased by more than 50%, the staff team expanded to nine full-time employees, and the USBC's budget exponentially grew. Under her leadership, the USBC began hosting the national conference for breastfeeding coalitions, and we were identified as a key partner in *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding*.

She was instrumental in weaving innovative theories of collective work into the organization, setting the USBC on the course to be an early leader in Collective Impact, as well as ensuring the infusion of racial equity into our work. As we enter 2018, we wish Megan well on all her future endeavors in this field and beyond.

Board of Directors

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 Muswamba Mwamba, Elected Director
 Brenda Reyes, Elected Director
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 Catherine Sullivan, Elected Director
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 Pauline Sakamoto, Elected Director
 Catherine Sullivan, Elected Director
 Laurel Wilson, Elected Director

Staff Team

Megan Renner, Executive Director (2011-2017)

Amelia Psmythe, Interim Executive Director

Kinkini Banerjee, Coalition Relations Director

Cheryl Lebedevitch, Senior Workplace Program Manager & Policy Analyst

Alyssa Speece, Constellation Program Manager

Camille Abbe, Meeting & Conference Manager

Denae Schmidt, Member Relations & Operations Manager

Lynette Anwulika Anigbo, Development & Evaluation Coordinator

Sarah Walz, Communications & Program Coordinator

Advocacy & Public Policy Interns

Jennifer Grooms (2017)

Tadeo Weiner-Davis (2017)

Tayler Whittler (2016)

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